



Frequently Asked Questions

Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources Programs

<http://www.fema.gov/ehp>

Q: How is FEMA assessing damages to historical properties and cultural resources from Hurricane Katrina?

A: The agency is organizing damage assessment teams who will work with the State Historic Preservation Officers in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama to determine the extent of damage to cultural institutions. The assessment process is underway, though given the magnitude of the hurricane. It will take time to thoroughly assess the storm's impact on public and private historic properties and cultural resources.

Also, as part of its responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, FEMA collaborates with Indian Tribes, and where appropriate, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to address their unique cultural concerns. Throughout the recovery, FEMA will provide technical assistance to state and local governments on historic preservation issues.

Q: How does FEMA oversee historic preservation activities in the disaster area?

A: FEMA has deployed specialists in archaeology and historic preservation to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama to focus specifically on the restoration and protection of historic and cultural resources. These specialists identify project-specific historic preservation concerns in the disaster area, provide technical assistance to response and recovery teams, and fulfill FEMA's legal responsibilities under various historic preservation laws, executive orders, and regulations.

Q: Is Public Assistance funding available to restore historical collections and records?

A: FEMA's Public Assistance program has a standard policy for the treatment of significant collections and records (http://www.fema.gov/rrr/pa/9524_6.shtm), making the restoration of some collections and individual objects eligible for funding. The policy refers to collections and items of "exceptionally significant cultural value" (located within or on public or private non-profit property). The Federal share is up to 75 percent of the cost. The State determines how the non-Federal share (up to 25 percent) is split with the applicants.

For information about funding assistance, see, "Before and After Disasters: Federal Funding for Cultural Institutions" (<http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PDFS/Disaster.pdf>). The National Trust for Historic Preservation is another resource (<http://www.nthp.org>).

Q: What other resources are available for restoring and protecting historical and cultural collections and items?

A: FEMA partners with the Heritage Emergency National Task Force to provide information and technical assistance on how to salvage and protect historical and cultural collections. The Task Force was formed in 1995 to help libraries and archives, museums, historical societies, and historic sites protect their collections and buildings from natural disasters. The Task Force materials on historic preservation are being distributed by FEMA's Disaster Field Offices in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.